

News Release

Senator Pete V. Domenici

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DOMENICI: SENATE APPROVES N.M. TRANSPORTATION FUNDS

FY 2001 Funding Bill Includes Estimated \$267.8 Million for NM Highways

WASHINGTON -- Senator Pete Domenici today confirmed that the U.S. Senate has approved the nation's major federal transportation funding bill, which includes an estimated \$267.8 million for New Mexico highways.

Domenici, a Senate Appropriations Committee member, said the Senate today passed the **FY 2001 Transportation Appropriations Bill**, a \$14 billion measure that provides funding for federal transportation projects. The measure will next be considered by a conference committee to reconcile differences between the Senate and House-passed version of the bill.

"Today, the Senate has made a strong commitment to the transportation needs of New Mexico," Domenici said. "We are working to solidify funding for important transportation projects across New Mexico. We've also invested resources in those technologies being developed in New Mexico that could improve transportation throughout the nation in the near future."

First, the bill provides \$29.7 billion nationally through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for highway programs, of which \$27 billion is available by formula for state highway programs. Domenici said preliminary FHWA estimates indicate the state of New Mexico will receive approximately \$260.8 million in **Federal-Aid Highway Program** funding, a \$22 million increase over FY 2000 funding.

In addition to these funds, FHWA estimates that New Mexico will also receive \$7 million in exempt formula funds similar to last year, for a total formula funding level of \$267.8 million. This formula funding is provided for the state to use on its priority highway projects.

Also specific to New Mexico, Domenici highlighted an additional \$8.3 million approved for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Center of Excellence, which includes the Albuquerque-based **Airworthiness Assurance Nondestructive Validation Center (AANC)** that is operated by Sandia National Laboratories. AANC core funding is \$3 million annually.

At Domenici's request, the bill provides \$1.8 million for training for newly developed inspection technologies at AANC; \$2.2 million for development of production

inspection tools for critical engine components in the propulsion activity; and, \$4.3 million to augment existing programs in advanced materials, crash worthiness, and nonstructural systems. None of this funding was sought by the president.

Domenici also gained Senate approval for his amendment to provide up to \$20 million nationwide for grants of up to \$500,000 to help communities or community consortia attract and subsidize improved air carrier service to airports currently receiving inadequate service.

“This funding will help communities attract and improve air carrier service to local airports currently receiving inadequate service. Many communities in New Mexico are currently underserved, and would greatly benefit from the economic opportunities provided by air carrier service,” Domenici said.

“In particular, this grant program could provide significant help to a consortium of communities in southeastern New Mexico that have been trying to provide air service in the region for quite some time,” he said.

Domenici said the communities of Roswell, Hobbs, Carlsbad, and Artesia have formed a consortium in anticipation of applying for federal funds under this program. In April, Domenici wrote the chairman of the Senate Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee to tout the consortium and give notice that he would be pushing for full funding for the grant program.

In promoting the southeast New Mexico consortium, Domenici noted that the group is raising \$200,000 in local funding and \$200,000 in state funds, and can demonstrate that “existing air service in that part of the state is insufficient and is accompanied by unreasonably high fares.”

“The southeastern New Mexico consortium is precisely the sort of applicant this grant program was intended to benefit. I will do my best to get this funding passed the Senate and will work to get specific funding for worthwhile New Mexico projects,” Domenici said.

Domenici outlined the following items in the bill of interest to New Mexico include:

National Environmental Respiratory Center - \$1 million through the FHWA research and development program to support NERC research on air quality related to health and environment concerns arising from transportation emissions. Domenici sought this funding.

Las Cruces International Airport - \$2.75 million through the FAA Facilities and Equipment program for taxiway lighting, apron lighting, and signs.

Airworthiness Assurance Center of Excellence - Within the FAA Research, Engineering and Development program, an \$8.3 million increase to support this FAA Center of Excellence, which includes the Airworthiness Assurance Nondestructive Validation Center (AANC) in Albuquerque. Core funding for AANC is \$3 million per year.

This program addresses issues relating to aging aircraft.

Special Metals Processing Consortium - Also within the FAA Research, Engineering and Development program, \$2 million to support the work of Sandia National Laboratories as a partner in the Special Metals Processing Consortium, which is working on improved metals and composites for jet aircraft engines.

Seraphim - Another \$2 million in low-speed rail funding to continue work on the prototype motor being developed by Sandia National Laboratories with magnetic levitation propulsion technology. The Segmented Rail Phased Induction Electric Magnetic Motor (Seraphim) technology is part of Sandia's kinetic energy nuclear weapons program. The technology has been tested at the proof-of-concept level for future light rail systems.

Santa Teresa Border Technology Center - \$1 million through the Transportation Department to continue the development of this Center to evaluate, test, integrate, verify, and validate border crossing deployment technologies through deployment at an operational border station.

Raton Rail Depot/Intermodal Transportation Center - \$750,000 through the FHWA's Transportation and Community System Preservation Program (TCSP) to continue this project. Raton was recently awarded \$522,600 in FY 2000 funds for this project.

Las Cruces Railroad and Transportation Museum - \$200,000 through the TCSP program to continue this Las Cruces project, which includes renovation of the Santa Fe Railroad Depot for continued use as a railroad station and a transportation hub, and to create a transportation museum on site.

Job Access and Reverse Commuter Grants - Funding is included for three projects requested by Domenici: **State of New Mexico/rural systems** - \$1.0 million; **Doña Ana County** - \$250,000; and **Las Cruces Urbanized Area** - \$260,000.

Jemez Pueblo Bypass - An additional \$1 million through the FHWA's Federal Lands Highway program for the project to divert traffic from Highway 4 around the Jemez Pueblo.

Indian Reservation Roads Program (IRR) - To compensate for obligation limitation reductions prescribed by TEA-21, the Senate bill provides an additional \$33.6 million for IRR. This provision increases spending authority for this program, for a total spending level of \$270.9 million on IRR. The bill also restores spending authority due to obligation limitation reductions for the Public Lands Highways, Park Roads, and Refuge Roads programs.

Pipeline Safety Initiative - The bill includes \$1 million in funding requested by Domenici through DOT's Research and Special Programs Administration (RSPA) and its Office of Pipeline Safety to use environmental laser mapping (ELM) technology to inspect oil pipelines for leaks and emissions that can result in potential explosion, ground water and soil contamination and greenhouse gas effects. A New Mexico company, LaSen of Las

Cruces, has developed an ELM technology that can be mounted on small commercial aircraft for application.

Road Life Initiative - Up to \$1.0 million is approved to support an evaluation of the 120-mile New Mexico Highway 44 project, which incorporates innovative design, construction, management and financing elements. These funds are to support the activities of the University of New Mexico and New Mexico State University which are part of the research team that will be evaluating this project. The other partners are the New Mexico State Highway and Transportation Department and the Volpe National Transportation Systems Center.

New Transit Systems - The Senate Subcommittee includes on its list of projects eligible for funding through the Federal Transit Administration's New Systems program (but there is no specific earmarking of funds), the following two New Mexico projects:

- High Capacity Transportation System Study - \$500,000 has been requested to continue work on a regional transportation system plan, including the option of light rail, in the Albuquerque area.
- Santa Fe Rail Project - \$3.0 million has been requested to continue this project to serve commuters between the community of Eldorado and the City of Santa Fe.

Bus and Bus Facilities - The Senate Subcommittee includes on its list of projects eligible for funding through the Federal Transit Administration's Bus and Bus Facilities program (but there is no specific earmarking of funds), the following New Mexico projects:

- Santa Fe Bus Replacement - \$2 million requested;
- Las Cruces University Shuttle Buses - \$500,000 has been requested;
- SOLAR project in Albuquerque - \$2 million is requested for phase 3;
- Albuquerque West Side Transit Maintenance Facility - \$20 million is requested to complete the facility;
- Albuquerque Buses - \$1.25 million requested and authorized in TEA-21;
- Angel Fire Public Works O&M Facility - \$750,000 requested;
- Clovis Buses and Transit Center - \$1.625 million total requested;
- Los Lunas Transportation Station - \$1.25 million requested; and,
- Carlsbad Transit Center - \$785,000 requested.